

Message Text

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ACTION PM-04

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INFO CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 1829

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, AF

SUBJ: CHANGES IN FOREIGN MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAM

REF: STATE 51768

1. FOLLOWING RESPONSES ARE KEYED TO QUESTIONS DESIGNATED
BY LETTERS A THROUGH F, PARA 5 REFTEL.

A. DIFFICULT AT THIS TIME TO ASSESS TOTAL IMMEDIATE
EFFECT UPON U.S. AFGHAN BILATERAL RELATIONS
WITHOUT KNOWING FULL DETAILS OF COST INCREASES. WE
HAVE CONFIRMED THAT COST INCREASES FOR SOME COURSES
WILL BE AS HIGH AS 74 PERCENT AND THIS ALARMS US. HOWEVER
WELL WE MAY EXPLAIN TO THE AFGHANS WHY DECREASES IN
OUR BILATERAL MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAM ARE NECESSARY
THEY WILL ATTRIBUTE THESE DECREASES TO MOTIVES HAVING
TO DO WITH DIMINISHED U.S. INTEREST IN THIS COUNTRY,
AND DIMINISHED INTEREST IN DEALING WITH ITS ARMED
FORCES TOWARD MITIGATING IN PART MASSIVE SOVIET
INFLUENCE. COMING AS THESE CUTS DO ON THE HEELS
OF WIDELY CIRCULATED PRESS REPORTS THAT U.S.
POLICY IS EVOLVING TO "PUNISH" GOVERNMENTS FOR
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THEIR VOTING RECORD IN MULTILATERAL FOGQMS, WE

ALSO BELIEVE IT LIKELY AFGHANS WILL MISUNDERSTAND
MILITARY TRAINING CUTS EVEN TO THE EXTENT
CN REGARDING TO AM AS EXPRESSIONS OF OUR DISAPPROVAL
OF AFGHAN POLICYS.IM

B. ALL MILITARY TRAINING IN THE U.S. FOR
AFGHANS IS GRANT AID, APPROPRIATED BY CONGRESS
UNDER MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS. IT IS VERY
UNLIKELY THAT THE AFGHAN MILITARY WILL PAY FOR
MILITARY TRAINING IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.
TRAINING REQUIREMENTS IF NOT U.S. MOST PROBABLY WOULD
BE MET BY LOOKING TO OTHER COUNTRIES (SOVIET
UNION, INDIA, EQYPT, IRAQ). SPECIFIC COURSES
OF GREATEST INTEREST TO AFGHANS ARE THE COMMANDERS
AND STAFF COLLEGE (A
RMY(AND THE AIR COMMAND AND
STAFF COLLEGE (AIR FORCE). IT IS WORTH NOTING
THAT THIS LEVEL CORRESPONDS TO WHAT FAVORED ALSO
BY CINCPAC, IN ADDITION TO BEING A COURSE LEVEL
WE FEEL GIVES THIS MISSION GREATEST BENEFIT. THIS
BENEFIT IS ENHANCED BY FACT THAT USUAL SELECTEES
FOR THESE COURSES HAVE HAD PRIOR TRAINING IN THE
U.S.HUTAFF PZLLEGE TRAINING FOR THE MID-GRADE
(MAJOR-LIEUTENANT COLONEL) HAS IN THE PAST PROVIDED
THE GREATEST BENEFIT TO OUR OVERALL NATIONAL
INTEREST AND IN ADDITION HOLDS THE GREATEST INTEREST
FOR THE AFGHAN MILITARY OFFICER.

C. EVEN IF COURSE COST DOUBLE WE CAN MAINTAIN
EXISTING LEVELS FOR COURSES DESCRIBED ABOVE.
THIS CAN ONLY BE DONE HOWEVER BY SQUEEZING OUT
COURSES AT LOWER LEVELS, WHICH WITHIN THREE TO
FIVE YEARS WILL SERIOUSLY AFFECT THE QUALITY OF
CANDIDATES AVAILABLE FOR COMMAND LEVEL COURSES.
WE BELIEVE ALSO THIS WILL LOWER THAT KIND OF
PRESTIGE FOR AMERICAN MILITARY COURSES WHICH
ASSURES US A CONTINUING SUPPLY OF WELL-QUALIFIED
AFGHAN VOLUNTEER WHO BELIEVE (WE THINK CORRECTLY)
THAT U.S. MILITARY TRAINING LEADS TO PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT.

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D. POBABLY NO KIND OF TRAINING WILL BE ABANDONED
ALTOGETHER, BUT NUMBERS OF STUDENTS ATTENDING
EACH KIND OF TRAINING MUST BE DRASTICALLY REDUCED.

E. IT IS A MOOT POINT WHETHER AFGHANS WILL TAKE
THE INITIATIVE IN SE
ARCHING FOR SLOTS TO REPLACE
THOSE LOST IN THE UNITED STATES BECAUSE OF U.S.

BUDGETARY STRINGENCIES, OR WHETHER SOVIET UNION WILL MOVE TO OFFER REPLACEMENTS FOR THESE EVEN BEFORE A REQUEST IS MADE. OVER THE YEARS THIS WILL NOT ONLY AFFECT AMERICAN PRESTIGE WITH THE AFGHAN MILITARY BUT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THAT MILITARY ITSELF. DESPITE LARGE RUSSIAN EFFORTS HERE THERE HAS BEEN A DEFINITE PATTERN OF SELECTION OF MOST PROMISING OFFICERS FOR TRAINING IN THE U.S. AND WE NOT ALSO THAT RECENTLY RETURNING U.S. COURSE GRADUATES HAVE BEEN GIVEN HIGH VISIBILITY POSITIONS. TWO KEY STAFF POSITIONS IN THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE ARE NOW FILLED BY COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF COLLEGE GRADUATES. BOTH INCUMBENTS ARE RESPECTED BY THEIR CONTEMPORARIES, AND BOTH READILY STATE THAT IT WAS THEIR U.S. TRAINING WHICH WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THEIR REACHING IMPORTANT POSITIONS. REDUCED TRAINING LEVELS WHICH CUT INTO BOTH TOTAL NUMBERS OF SLOTS AND THE QUALITY OF TRAINEES WILL SERIOUSLY ERODE PRESENTLY FAVORABLE U.S. POSITION. DOHST THE LONG TERM EFFECT ON ELIMINATION OF CURRENT TRAINING BY THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE A TOTAL LOSS OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN U.S. OFFICIALS AND THE AFGHAN MILITARY. YET THE MILITARY FORMS AFGHANISTAN'S MOST COHESIVE MODERN INSTITUTION, WITH CONSIDERABLE SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF THIS COUNTRY. ALREADY THE MASSIVE INFUSION OF SOVIET ARMS, ADVICE AND TRAINING HAS MADE ACCESS TO THE AFGHAN MILITARY DIFFICULT. WHAT ACCESS WE HAVE HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF THE PRESTIGE AND COMPETENCE OF OUR (ADMITTEDLY SMALL) MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAM. CONFIDENTIAL

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TO LOSE THIS ACCESS IS IN THE SHORT RUN A MISFORTUNE; IN THE LONG RUN IT COULD BECOME A MAJOR POLITICAL MISTAKE. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT A FUTURE LEADER OF AFGHANISTAN MIGHT HAVE ATTENDED ONE, MORE OR EVEN ALL COURSES CURRENTLY MADE AVAILABLE TO AFGHANS BY THE USSR. THESE ARE: A TWO YEAR BASIC COURSE AT THE LIEUTENANT LEVEL; TWO AND A HALF YEARS OF THE "CAREER COURSE" AT THE CAPTAIN LEVEL; TWO YEARS OF THE "SENIOR LEVEL" COURSE FOR MAJORS AND LT COLONELS; TWO YEARS AT THE WAR COLLEGE LEVEL FOR OFFICERS WITH THE RANK OF COLONEL; PLUS OTHER COURSES USUALLY OF ONE YEAR DURATION GIVEN AT THE COL/GEN LEVEL. THIS IS A PROSPECT WHICH DISMAYS US WHEN COMBINED WITH THE POSSIBILITY THAT NO U.S. TRAINING MIGHT HAVE

BEEN AVAILABLE TO THIS OFFICER.

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